

**SAN BENITO COUNTY
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGULAR MEETING**

June 16, 2011 2:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair De La Cruz, Director Boch, Director Botelho, Director Gomez and Vice Chair Emerson

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy; Transportation Planning Manager, Mary Gilbert; Transportation Planner, Veronica Lezama; Secretary, Monica Gomez

OTHERS PRESENT:

Richard Krumholz, Richard Rosales, and Mark McCumsey, Caltrans District 5; Miranda Thompson, Mead & Hunt; Debbie Hale, Transportation Agency for Monterey County; Stephanie Aguilar, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair De La Cruz called the meeting to order at 2:05 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

Upon a motion duly made by Director Emerson, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Director's unanimously approved the Certificate of Posting.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Chair De La Cruz stated for the record that the COG Board received Joe Thompson's public comment correspondence dated May 18, 2011 through June 9, 2011. The correspondence was entered into the public record

D. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Rheinheimer

Ms. Rheinheimer reported that staff sent out thank you letters to Graniterock Company for the "Quality in Construction Award" plaque as directed by Chair De La Cruz.

Ms. Rheinheimer reported that the City of Hollister will be receiving a report on the Traffic Impact Fee Program on Monday, June 20th. The San Benito County Board of Supervisor's will receive the same report on Tuesday, June 21st.

Ms. Rheinheimer mentioned that she will be going on maternity leave beginning July 11th. Ms. Rheinheimer noted that Mary Gilbert will be managing the COG office while she is away on maternity leave.

E. CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 REPORT – Krumholz

Caltrans District 5 Director, Rich Krumholz announced that Caltrans District Director, Cindy McKim, retired. The Acting District Director of Caltrans is Malcolm Dougherty.

Mr. Krumholz reported that the Budget was vetoed by the Governor this afternoon. Because of this, Caltrans will not be able to award new contracts until the Budget is approved.

Mr. Krumholz pointed out that the San Juan Interchange Project near the Red Barn, was not included in the Caltrans Projects Report. He stated that the Project should be “ready to list” by next spring.

Director Botelho inquired about the Highway 156 Lighting project and whether the project has been awarded.

Mr. Krumholz stated the contract for the project should be awarded later this month.

F. BOARD OF DIRECTOR’S REPORTS: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated May 19, 2011 – Gomez
2. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Special Joint Meeting Minutes Dated May 19, 2011 – Gomez
3. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Transaction Report (Financial Claims) Dated May 2011 – Postigo
4. **RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5
5. **Surplus Property Transfer** – Gilbert
 - a. **ADOPT** Resolution 07-11 Declaring COG-Owned Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Grant of Such Surplus Property to the City of Hollister (4/5 Vote)
 - b. **MAKE DETERMINATION** that the Conveyance is Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Pursuant to Section 15312 of the CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations).
6. **APPROVE** Letter to County of San Benito Regarding Executive Director Furloughs – Rheinheimer
7. **APPROVE** Administrative Modification #1 to the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan – Rheinheimer
8. **APPROVE** FY 2011/2012 Council of Governments Budget – Rheinheimer
9. **Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Overall Work Program** – Gilbert
 - a. **APPROVE** the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Overall Work Program, Which Includes Planning Activities to be Performed by the Council of Governments, and
 - b. **AUTHORIZE** the Executive Director to Sign the Overall Work Program Agreement

Upon a motion duly made by Director Emerson, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Director’s unanimously approved Items 1- 9 from the Consent agenda.

REGULAR AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:

10. **DISCUSS** State Route 156 Improvement Project and Consensus Building Exercise Held in May and **PROVIDE DIRECTION** as Appropriate – Rheinheimer

Ms. Rheinheimer provided a Power-Point presentation on the San Benito Route 156 Improvement Project, report from the May Consensus Building Workshop. The presentation provided a review on the following: Consensus building, Design Concepts, and Funding for the project.

There was discussion about Roundabouts and some of the advantages over a traditional traffic signal.

Director Gomez inquired about the impacts roundabouts may have on commercial truck traffic.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that in general it is anticipated that truck traffic will get through quicker because roundabouts slow truck traffic down, but will not cause trucks to come to a complete stop.

Director's Botelho and Emerson stated that overall they were pleased with the workshop discussions and outcome. The group agreed on several unifying aspects of the project design. However, they were disappointed to learn that the Roundabout at the Alameda would have to be taken on as a separate project.

Director Gomez inquired about the roundabout and why it would have to be looked at as a separate project. He also inquired about the construction of a median barrier.

Rich Krumholz stated that the particular intersection for the roundabout (at the Alameda and Hwy 156) is located outside of the scope of the current project. Mr. Krumholz stated that the median barrier would be necessary if they are to consider the narrower median from the currently proposed 46ft median, to a 30 ft median.

Director Gomez suggested installing a median barrier for improved safety in the area.

Director Boch inquired why the concept of Hwy 101 to the Alameda isn't followed through all the way to Union Road is not being considered as it seems much more economical.

Rich Krumholz stated that Caltrans staff will review which ideas are feasible and report back to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Stephen Rosati

Mr. Rosati stated that the Committee should be commended for saving years on this project. Mr. Rosati stated that once Caltrans reports back on what can or cannot be done, he hopes that the City of San Juan Bautista supports it whole heartedly as it is a "win, win" for everybody. Mr. Rosati suggested having a hedge in place of trees along the bike path/trail because trees cause problems for farmers and their crops. Mr. Rosati cautioned the Board about Traffic Impact Fees and not having enough funding for this project when the time comes.

Rich Krumholz stated that Project Manager, Richard Rosales, will provide an update in July on the continuing studies on the viability of the roundabouts at Bixby Road and Union Mitchell and the reduction of the median width.

Board members noted that there is still a fiscal concern; however, they plan on moving forward towards a solution.

Ms. Rheinheimer asked to move on to Item 12 before Item 11 due to time constraint on members of the public who are reporting on the subject.

12. DISCUSS and PROVIDE DIRECTION on Possible Separation from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that Staff has completed preliminary research on the feasibility of separating from AMBAG and conducting transportation-related activities in-house and/or via Memorandum of Understanding with other agencies. Ms. Gilbert reviewed the implications for COG should it consider

separating from AMBAG.

Ms. Gilbert noted that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) may also consider separation from AMBAG and would seek MPO status due to their population size. COG, TAMC, and RTC could consider establishing a memorandum of understanding to coordinate the development of population, employment, and housing forecasts and development and maintenance of the Regional Travel Demand Model.

Director Gomez stated as an Associate member to AMBAG, San Benito County doesn't come up very often, although San Benito County is much smaller in population. Director Gomez stated that he is supportive of staff further researching separation from AMBAG if it is beneficial for San Benito County.

Director Botelho stated that he has always had an appreciation of AMBAG and its role in the region. He commented that there are pro's and con's in separating from them.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Debbie Hale, Executive Director

Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

Ms. Hale stated that her Board has also directed her to further look into this issue and she will be presenting more information to them next week at their meeting. From a staff perspective, if TAMC were handling all the transportation responsibilities, it would be a more streamlined process. The way that a change would occur would be that the City Councils and the County Boards of Supervisors would have to vote to withdraw and it would have to be 75% of them doing so, including the largest City, which is Salinas. Ms. Hale stated that Santa Cruz County Board is being briefed as well.

Stephanie Aguilar

AMBAG, President

Ms. Aguilar asked the Board and staff to look very closely at parallels on what AMBAG can provide, in contrast to just what a Transportation Agency can provide. She stated that AMBAG is much broader, it brings hundreds of thousands dollars into the Region, which a transportation agency cannot do because they don't have the staff to constantly be working in these areas to get these monies. The Energy Watch has brought in thousands and thousands of dollars into the Region and has also helped this region in regards to energy consumption and reduction. Ms. Aguilar stated that AMBAG is here to help and asked that the Board and staff please let them know if help is needed in any areas.

Director Emerson concurred with Director Gomez's comments. He added that when the Energy Watch Program came to the City it was great however, perhaps it may have been done another way. Director Emerson also noted reservations about remaining with AMBAG.

Director Botelho stated that there may be some repetition in staff work and representation from San Benito County; however, he did not feel comfortable in withdrawing from AMBAG at this point.

Rich Krumholz stated that he has been listening to the same discussion from Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito Counties regarding this subject. Mr. Krumholz stated that it might be prudent to hear the results of the 2010 Census as well as the way the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU plays out at a federal level. It may be more important for the larger Counties than it is for San Benito.

The Board directed staff to continue discussions with TAMC and RTC at a regional level and report back to the Board with more information.

11. RECEIVE Update on Truck Route Planning in San Benito County and **FORWARD** Letter and Proposed Truck Route Map to City and County for Planning Purposes – Rheinheimer

Ms. Rheinheimer reported that the Council of Governments, City of Hollister, County of San Benito, Caltrans, and the California Highway Patrol have discussed truck routes in San Benito County over the past year. The goal of this truck route planning effort was to identify appropriate routes in the San Benito County region to support the agricultural and trucking industry and to protect public safety.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that staff recommends that the Council of Governments recommend that the County and City of Hollister use the proposed truck route map when planning for and designing improvements at intersections and roadways along the truck route system.

Ms. Rheinheimer noted that in addition, the California Highway Patrol proposed to help the trucking and agricultural industries better understand the truck route rules. This effort will be accomplished by providing written information to truckers who are stopped by the California Highway Patrol on violations.

Staff recommended that the Board forward the letter and proposed San Benito County Truck Route Map to the City of Hollister, County of San Benito, and Caltrans.

Director Botelho expressed concern with designating the dotted area on the map at Prescott and San Justo to the east and through Bixby and around Duncan as a Truck Route. He recommended removing these dotted areas from the map because it's going to encourage interstate trucks to use this route when they should be using Highway 101 to the Highway 129 exit. He noted that the road width along Bixby and Duncan are very narrow and they also have a narrow turning radius.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that they were trying to accomplish getting from the farm fields to the processing plants because often times they have longer trucks trying to get to these areas. If you eliminate that there may be some concern from the agriculture industry, which will be required to acquire smaller trucks that could be timely and costly for them.

Directors Gomez and Emerson recommended forwarding the letter to the County and City to allow the local agencies to discuss and make recommendations to their respective Board and Council members.

Director Boch stated that there must be a better way for truck traffic to get around the area and expressed concern over the truck traffic coming off of Bixby, Duncan, and Lucy Brown trying to get onto Highway 156.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Stephen Rosati

Mr. Rosati asked if Santa Ana Road and McCray Street are designated as Truck Routes. He also asked if the truck route from the corner of Santa Ana Road and Highway 156 to McCray Street down to Fourth Street has officially been eliminated from the City's records as a designated truck route.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that COG staff has been working with the City's Engineering department as well as the County to designate the Highway 25 Bypass as a truck route. In these discussions, the City was suppose to de-designate the McCray Street truck route, but was not aware if the action had occurred.

Mr. Rosati suggested that the Board or City make an official statement to the newspaper stating that the McCray Street truck route is no longer a designated truck route in San Benito County.

Director Gomez stated that the City will take Mr. Rosati's comments into consideration when this item is addressed at the City level.

Director Botelho stated that all the information must be obtained in order to make an informed decision because there are some areas that will require improvement.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez, and seconded by Director Emerson, the Directors unanimously approved Item 11.

Upon a motion made by Director Gomez, and seconded by Director Emerson, the Directors voted to adjourn the COG meeting.

ADJOURN TO COG MEETING JULY 21, 2011.